

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 13634

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV BQG
SUBJECT: LORENZ CASE: FRG RECIPROCATES FRENCH
PUZZLEMENT

REFS: (A) PARIS 24090; (B) BONN 13456; (C) BONN 13388

BEGIN SUMMARY. VAN WELL HAS TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE FRG IS PUZZLED AS TO MOTIVES FOR THE FRENCH POSITION ON THE LORENZ CASE AND OTHER BERLIN ISSUES OF LATE. HE INDICATED THAT, WHILE MOST OF THE RECENT PROPOSALS FOR HANDLING THE CASE ARE ACCEPTABLE, THE FRG HAS NOT YET SORTED OUT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OBERLE CAN BE PLACED FORMALLY IN CHARGE OF THE PROSECUTION. THE GERMANS, LIKE WE, HAVE RECEIVED INDICATIONS THAT THE FRENCH ATTITUDE MAY BE SOFTENING SOMEWHAT. END SUMMARY.

1. FOREIGN OFFICE STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL DISCUSSED THE LORENZ CASE WITH ME ON AUGUST 18 AND AGAIN ON AUGUST 19.
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HE INITIATED THE FIRST DISCUSSION, DURING A MEETING AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE ON OTHER SUBJECTS, WITH THE QUESTION OF WHY THE FRENCH WERE BEING SO DIFFICULT WITH REGARD TO THE HANDLING OF THE CASE. IN SOMETHING OF A MIRROR IMAGE OF PLAISANT'S SPECULATION (REF A) THAT THE GERMANS WERE "PREENING" IN PREPARATION FOR BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO THE FRG, VAN WELL WONDERED ALOUD WHETHER THE SUDDEN

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE FRENCH STEMMED FROM REMARKS BREZHNEV MAY HAVE MADE WHEN HE WAS IN PARIS. THE TIMING WOULD CERTAINLY FIT, HE ADDED.

2. I DISCOURAGED THAT LINE OF SPECULATION, SUGGESTING THAT THE FRENCH ATTITUDE MIGHT SIMPLY BE A REACTION TO A COINCIDENCE OF RECENT EVENTS -- THE BAUM STATEMENT AND THE MAIHOFFER VISIT TO BERLIN -- COUPLED WITH THE FRENCH BELIEF THAT THERE HAD BEEN A VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENTS ON HANDLING OF THE LORENZ CASE. VAN WELL INTERJECTED THAT THE GERMANS WERE DOING THEIR BEST AND THAT THE FRENCH WERE BEING IMPOSSIBLE. I THEN COMMENTED THAT WE HAD HAD SOME INDICATION THAT THE FRENCH POSITION MIGHT IN PART HAVE BEEN DUE TO MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN PARIS AND THAT THE FRENCH HAD SHOWN A DISPOSITION TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE MATTER. IT APPEARED THAT EVERYTHING MIGHT BE WORKED OUT IF THE FRG COULD ACCEPT THE MOST RECENT PROPOSALS ADVANCED IN THE BONN GROUP.

3. VAN WELL SAID THAT GENERAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON THESE PROPOSALS WHEN THEY WERE DISCUSSED AUGUST 17 IN THE WISCHNEWSKI GROUP. THERE REMAINED, HOWEVER, A PROBLEM WITH REGARD TO THE STATUS OF OBERLE, THE HEAD OF THE BERLIN OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL PROSECUTOR. TO MAKE HIM THE HEAD OF THE PROSECUTION TEAM WOULD BE SEEN AS AN ARTIFICIAL MOVE, AS IT WAS GENERALLY KNOWN CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT HE WAS NOT A PROSECUTOR. TO MY SUGGESTION THAT SUCH A DESIGNATION SHOULD BE POSSIBLE IF ONLY FOR COSMETIC REASONS AND THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE IF OBERLE COULD TAKE SOME ACTIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE DESIGNATION, VAN WELL SAID THE MATTER WAS BEING STUDIED. HE REITERATED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE PROBLEMS, ADDING THAT -- ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT IT WOULD LOOK STRANGE -- IT MIGHT GIVE RISE TO LEGAL PROBLEMS AND COULD FORM THE BASIS FOR AN APPEAL. WHEN I RAISED THE STATUS OF THE ATTORNEYS WHO WERE BEING DETAILED FROM KARLSRUHE, VAN WELL SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE NO PROBLEM AND THAT IT WAS ALREADY DECIDED THAT THEY WOULD MOVE TO BERLIN AND AVOID COMMUTING.

4. IN THE AUGUST 19 DISCUSSION, VAN WELL TOLD ME THAT HE ALSO HAD RECEIVED INDICATIONS THAT THE FRENCH WERE TAKING A SOMEWHAT LESS RIGID ATTITUDE. HE ADDED THAT IT APPEARED THAT, IF AGREEMENT WERE REACHED ON HANDLING THE LORENZ CASE, THE FRENCH WOULD ALSO LIFT THEIR OBJECTIONS TO THE MEETING IN BERLIN OF THE EC MONETARY COMMITTEE. (COMMENT: THESE OBJECTIONS HAVE ONLY BEEN PRESENTED TO THE GERMANS BILATERALLY. THE

FRENCH HAVE NOT SUGGESTED IN THE BONN GROUP OR IN A
TRIPARTITE MEETING THAT THE MEETING SHOULD BE CANCELLED.
END COMMENT). STOESSEL

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